

## **ENVIRONMENTAL CHARTER**

**Summary:** North Norfolk District Council's (NNDC) Corporate Plan commits to the delivery, and adoption, of an Environmental Charter.

The draft Environmental Charter is based on evidence and views contributed at engagement events and has been formulated with the input of a wide range of officers and members, through a series of workshops. The draft document appended to this report therefore takes into account how the policy will apply to different services areas. Prior to its final approval, adoption and publication, the draft will be shared with external stakeholders via the Environment Forum, and any further feedback will be taken into account.

**Options considered:** To endorse the draft Environmental Charter for consultation with the Environment Forum, prior to a revised draft being considered by Cabinet and Council for adoption

**Conclusions:** The Environmental Charter is an important step in the Council's approach to dealing with the Climate Change Emergency declared in April 2019. Born out of public and stakeholder proposals garnered at the Council's 'Environment Forum' the Environmental Charter is a public facing document which sets out NNDC's path towards environmental excellence and a net-zero carbon emissions future.

**Recommendations:** The recommendation is to endorse the draft Environmental Charter for consultation with the Environment Forum, prior to a revised draft being considered by Cabinet and Council for adoption.

**Reasons for Recommendations:** NNDC's Corporate Plan commits to delivering an Environmental Charter. Once approved the Environmental Charter will become an adopted Council document which will enable this element of the Corporate Plan to be delivered whilst simultaneously reinforcing NNDC's commitment to addressing the climate change emergency, which it declared in April 2019. Engaging with the Environment Forum will complete the circle of engagement as the concepts within the Charter are derived from input provided at the first Forum workshop.

## **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS AS REQUIRED BY LAW**

*(Papers relied on to write the report, which do not contain exempt information and which are not published elsewhere)*

N/A

Cabinet Member:                      Ward(s) affected:  
Cllr Nigel Lloyd                      District Wide

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### **1. Introduction**

1.1 In April 2019 NNDC declared a climate change emergency.

Having considered the views of stakeholders, residents and community groups at the 'Environment Forums' held in 2019 NNDC committed to the development of an Environmental Charter and Action Plan with the view that these documents would outline the Council's route towards achieving environmental excellence and net-zero carbon emissions by 2030.

1.2 A draft Environmental Charter was prepared earlier this year and has been informed by a series of workshops with staff and Members. The draft document accordingly reflects the input from a wide range of internal stakeholders. It is now at a stage where it can be shared externally, prior to its adoption, following consideration of any representations. *Please see the draft version of the Environmental Charter in Appendix One of this report.*

1.3 The Environmental Charter was written assuming the definition of charter as 'a formal document which describes the rights, aims or principles of an organisation'.

1.4 The Environmental Charter comprises three main sections, each with differing aims and principles. These are summarised as:

- delivering change across the Council's own internal estates and operations in order to achieve environmental excellence and net-zero carbon emissions by 2030;
- the Council as a community leader and influencer, supporting and enabling our communities, stakeholders, businesses and residents to address the challenges presented by the climate change crisis; and
- how residents/citizens can act in support of the Council's environmental aims and make a difference in their own neighbourhoods to address the climate change crisis.

### **2. Current position**

2.1 During the internal engagement process with both officers and Members the contents of the draft Environmental Charter were developed and discussed.

The overall document was well received and support from staff and Members for the principles, aims and ambitions of the Environmental Charter were overwhelmingly positive.

- 2.2. Feedback from these sessions has informed the draft Environmental Charter and the final draft version of the document is appended to the report (see Appendix One). The engagement workshops also elicited many ideas as to how the Charter’s aims can be achieved and this will help inform the development of an action plan.
- 2.3 An Environment Forum session will be held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> April, where, among other feedback on the steps the Council has taken to address climate change since the first Forum in 2019, the draft Environmental Charter will be shared and feedback elicited.

### 3. Corporate Plan Objectives

- 3.1 The table below demonstrates how the Environmental Charter will meet key corporate priorities as contained within the Corporate Plan:

<b>Corporate plan objectives</b>	<b>How the Environmental Charter supports Corporate Plan Objectives</b>
<p><b>Objective 4</b></p> <p>Developing an Engagement Strategy to set out how we will consult with our customers and our local Communities</p>	<p>The Environmental Charter is a valuable communication too which will be used to engage with residents, parish councils and community groups on the climate change crisis.</p>
<p><b>Objective 4.4</b></p> <p>Establish Environment Panels</p>	<p>The Environment Forum initially proposed that NNDC should adopt an Environmental Charter. The next Environment Forum is planned for the 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2021 and it is expected that Officers will provide an update on the progress made with the emerging Environmental Charter.</p> <p>The Environmental Charter specifically references the role that Environment Forums play in increasing environmental awareness within the District.</p>

<p><b>Objective 1.1</b></p> <p>Establish a framework by which the Council can work with interested parties as climate champions</p>	<p>The Environmental Charter explicitly references this Corporate Plan ambition by pledging to support a new generation of climate champions. This will be established by engaging with residents, communities and business groups across the District.</p>
<p><b>Objective 5</b></p> <p>Planting 110,000 trees – one for each resident</p>	<p>The Environmental Charter explicitly references this Corporate Plan ambition and advocates tree planting projects as an effective way in which to promote biodiversity within the District.</p>
<p><b>Objective 7.5</b></p> <p>Implement local community waste reduction measures, e.g. community fridges.</p>	<p>The Environmental Charter references the reduction in single use plastics, composting schemes and general waste reduction.</p>
<p><b>Objective 3</b></p> <p>Undertaking an audit to establish the Council’s baseline carbon footprint</p>	<p>The Environmental Charter pledges to carry out a baseline carbon data report and to provide annual reports which update progress</p>
<p><b>Objective 2.1</b></p> <p>Formulate a Local Plan that supports the transition to a low-carbon future</p>	<p>The Environmental Charter references a range of the low carbon policies contained within the draft Local Plan.</p>

**4. Financial and Resource Implications**

4.1 There are limited/no financial implications resulting from the formulation or adoption of the Environmental Charter.

- 4.2 Despite this, the financial implications of the specific actions that will be taken in order to deliver the Environmental Charter will need to be considered at a later stage. These will be presented in the format of an Action Plan and will sit alongside the Council's carbon emission baseline information.

## **5. Legal Implications**

- 5.1 N/A - whilst the Environmental Charter is a formal document it is not legally binding

## **6. Communication Implications**

- 6.1 The Environmental Charter is an important tool for NNDC to use to communicate with residents, businesses, community groups and interested parties the work that is being done, and will be done, to address the climate change emergency in North Norfolk.
- 6.2 The Environmental Charter is a public facing document which will clearly set out the '*aims and principles*' that NNDC will uphold in order to address the climate change emergency.

## **7. Risks**

- 7.1 The Council is morally obliged to act upon its declaration of the Climate Emergency; this Charter is the manifestation of that. It will also be expected to proactively deliver the pledges made within the Charter and it is anticipated that this will be scrutinised by pressure groups, private individuals and interested parties.
- 7.2 Failure to take action on the pledges contained within the Environmental Charter may expose the Council to reputational damage.
- 7.3 Failure to deliver a timely and well considered Environmental Charter may also expose the Council to reputational damage.

## **8 Equality and Diversity**

No matters relating to equality and diversity arise from the contents of this report.

## **9 Section 17 Crime and Disorder considerations**

This report raises no matters of concern to crime and disorder.

## **10 Sustainability implications**

No negative matters relating to sustainability arise from this report.

## **11 Conclusions**

The Environmental Charter is an important step in the Council's approach to

dealing with the Climate Change Emergency declared in April 2019. Born out of public and stakeholder proposals garnered at the Council's 'Environment Forum' the Environmental Charter is a public facing document which sets out NNDC's path towards environmental excellence and a net-zero carbon emissions future.